

Mr Crop's Harriers
by G. Bowers



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 138



MR. CROP'S



HARRIERS.



MRCROP'S HARRIERS



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MR. CROP'S HARRIERS

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ILLUSTRATIONS.

FACSIMILE WATER-COLOUR SKETCHES.

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Mr Crook's first day's hunting



helps a man on in country society so much as becoming a master of hounds.

So thinks Mr. Tom Crop, a younger son of a poor squire. He is a thorough sportsman, having been "entered" in earliest youth to fox and hare, varied by ferreting rabbits or rats, or going out to "kill something," on non-hunting days, during seven months of the year.

Failing, by a "short length," as he expresses it, to accomplish wonders at school or college, he is supposed to have learned farming in a sporting county, where he went as "pupil," and to have improved his mind by travel.

He has lately returned from Australia, having come into a little money from a departed relative, and has "roughed it" sufficiently abroad to be glad to get back to civilisation at home.

Seeing an advertisement of a pack of harriers in want of a master, Mr. Crop is induced to answer it, as it is in his native county, and writes to an old friend in the neighbourhood to enquire particulars.

The answer is, "Fifteen couple of working hounds, kennels free, country you recollect, abominably wired, and railways all round, plenty of hares, good sort of farmers, fair subscription. Come and dine and sleep and talk it over." Crop thinks this sounds promising. He is a good rider and a light weight, devoted to hunting in any form, has no judgment, plenty of pluck; and, although he has never been a master of hounds, he "fancies himself" too much to doubt his capacity for the post.

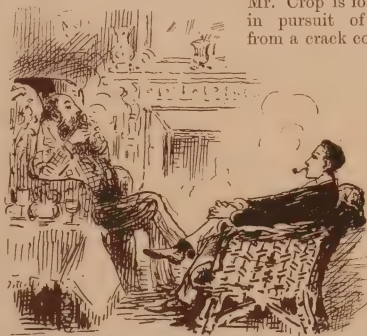
"The Cottage," Cramphurst, is the name of the snug bachelor quarters of Mr. Crop's old friend, Mark Browser, who welcomes him heartily. They talk over old times, when Crop was a lad, and Browser, who now walks 14, could ride 10 st., and was a promising pupil at a rich brewery, in which he afterwards became partner. Next morning they walk across a pretty village green, to the kennels close by, kindly lent by the late master of the "Mugger Hill Harriers."

Bolter, or Mr. Bolter, as he likes to be called, the kennel huntsman, receives our friends,



The Meger Still Harriers

and shows them the hounds. If he were not on such a small scale, Bolter looks as if he would soon be too heavy to ride. He seems devoted to the hounds, everything is very tidy about the place; he is said to be a good whip and kennel man, and his manners are perfect. Mr. Crop is fond of all kinds of hunting, and used to "roughing it" in pursuit of sport, therefore is not so disappointed as a swell from a crack county might have been, at the appearance of the pack.



All heights, all sizes, some big heavy hounds, some crooked-legged and flat-sided ones, a few smart-looking and useful ones. "Not a very level lot," Mr. Crop remarks. "Oh!" says Brower, "we are not specially particular down here about that, they have been neglected lately; if you come, you'll soon get them into better form." "Rare good hounds to hunt, sir," says Bolter, confidentially.

After much consideration and correspondence, Crop decides to take the pack with all faults, and arranges to put up for the season with his old friend Brower, who, although too lazy to ride much, has for some time acted as secretary and treasurer of the hunt.

Early in October, Crop goes down to Cramp-hurst, and soon makes, or renews, acquaintance

with the people in the neighbourhood.

There is plenty to do in the kennels; Bolter appears very useful, but bigoted to his own ways, and much addicted to a short pipe in the morning, which he promptly pockets on the appearance of his new master.

As to horses, in common with other little light-weight men, Mr. Crop believes in his own judgment, and buys a couple at Tattersall's, to begin with, thus avoiding jealousy in the neighbourhood amongst those who are anxious to serve the new master, and escaping what



Don Juan *"Mr. Baller" at exercise*

he much dreads, being "taken in." One of his purchases, a great, big, leggy brown horse, turns out to be a desperate puller, but looks like a hunter, and is up to twice Crop's weight; the other, a blood bay, who can slip along if he chooses, hits his legs, and has to be ridden in bandages.

Browser sticks to his two cobs of last season—useful slaves, who go in harness, hack, or hunt, and buys a grey of a tenant, with a wonderful character for "manners." Bolter is mounted on this for the present, and with his master, has plenty to do, exercising the



hounds and horses, and controlling the vagaries of "the boy," a necessary evil, and the scapegoat of all stable worries. In common with his kind, Bolter has bad hands, and the grey carries his head high; and Crop's brown horse is at present a misery to ride with hounds.



Some of the crops sold

The



Rev. John Chuff, the bachelor Vicar of Cramphurst, is a great acquisition in dull evenings, and a real good sort. Sir Timothy de Boots has the big house in the village; and his daughter comes out with the harriers, attended by the family coachman. Young Fred Hawthorn and his pretty wife have a place two miles off, and are good friends of the hunt. Toddleton, a faithful supporter, lives close by; and old Hustler Tuck, with his twenty-acre estate, and wire all round it, looks in sometimes after dinner, being an inveterate card-player, and merry evenings are spent.

After many days' exercising and trotting about to get the hounds used to him, and into some kind of form, Crop ventures to begin hunting. A meet at Sir T. de Boots', at Beech Lawn, is announced. Dismay! The hounds are as wild as hawks, and the field unmanageable!

The second day—Disgrace! He sees Browser can't ride a bit now, and has galloped over Gaylass and Peaceful, on his roan cob, which he can't hold.

The third day—Despair! A slight fog in the morning, Browser won't go. Meet at a farm six miles off. A great spread; and not half-a-dozen people. Disappointment of hospitable host. Impossible to hunt. Bolter has been "treated," and can't find his way; two couple of hounds missing, and fog increasing, all get lost on the road home.

But the hounds soon begin to improve. Thanks to everybody's friend, the well-known Dick Barle, who hunted harriers





The first day - Dismay.

before he became master of the famous Spreadabout Staghounds. He looks over the Mugger Hill pack with Crop, and drafts all the useless ones, the babblers and skitters, and buys for him two couple of steady ones who can be depended on; so the pack soon shows signs of better ways. "And who knows," says Crop, "but that we may have a Piper or a Hamlet to send to Peterborough show next year, and cut them all out!"

Our master soon gets to know his field, and their peculiarities are as varied as those of his hounds.



Most of them are the usual type of "harrier folk"—flat-hatted and long-coated, and some of them wear caps. They ride about solemnly, smoking enormous cigars. Messrs. Plod and Clod, heavy and worthy farmers, always giving advice, and riding recklessly over their own seeds; Mrs. Clod, too, has lately been ordered to ride for her health, and is said to have cost C. a fortune in lessons at a fashionable equestrian academy. "That's your hard-up farmer," says old Hustler Tuck, who was knocked down by Mrs. Clod the other day at a gap.

Occasionally, however, Mr. Crop's field is enlivened by the presence of ladies from other hunts. Pretty Mrs. Hawthorn and her sister, Miss Evergreen, from the Fallowfield, on clever-looking cobs.

Mrs. Cutemdown, from the Spreadabout, now and then has a day to spare, and sometimes Mr. Hardup, an old friend of Browser's, comes to dine and sleep, and gets a mount somehow.

The Rev. John Chuff loves harriers, and never misses a day. He wears a round hat and a speckled tie, and the neatest of grey leggings. His mount is a blood-looking bay mare. When they do get a run, he generally manages to slip away first with Crop and the hounds, and is an excellent whip. He and our master soon become great friends, and Bolter is devoted to him.



The second day - Disgust!

Most of the other people ride about till the hounds come round again, which they generally do, after losing or killing their hare.

Crop does not love his field. He hates chatter, and is not a "ladies' man." Browser, on the contrary, enjoys gossip, and does not in the least mind crawling about till late in the afternoon, without much sport.

Just giving up in this way, early in November, all at once, strange hounds appear—followed by a whip, on a very much tired horse. A scene! The hounds get mixed—more horsemen follow, all looking pretty well "done." Many questions are asked—"Which way have they gone? Have you seen them?" Answered by, "Who are you? Where have you come from?" etc. "Blessed if I don't think they be fish-hounds!"* says Bolter, helping to separate the packs. "Fish-hounds be blowed!" says the whip, "we're the Hurricane Stag-hounds. Been running for two hours—our horses are all beat—must take him soon, or leave him out." "Change with my man," says Crop, "and we will help you." Bolter is soon off the grey, and ordered home with the tired horse and his own hounds; Crop and the "Rev. Chuff," as he is always called, and a few more joining the now straggling staggers.

Delightful finish! The stag is safely taken at dusk, and our master arrives with the Hurricane Hounds, huntsman, and whip, for gruel at the cottage on their way home.

* Drag-hounds.





ROWSER ON STAG HUNTING.

Who is the master of the Hurricane? Why, the master is the mistress, Mrs. Korpe-Korpe, widow of old Korpe, of Hurricane Lodge, near Blushington, quite the other side of the county. She has a mania for stag-hunting, and is supposed to have married him for his hounds. He died two years ago, and she keeps up the kennels; gets Dick Barle to choose her deer, and has a capital pack of hounds. What sort of woman is she? Why, a thin, pale, light-weight one, of eight-and-twenty or thirty. I wonder why she was not out the other day, when we got mixed up with her hounds? She has a good figure, good hands on a horse, plenty of pluck, and, I should say, not three ideas on any subject but hunting. But I really do not know much about Mrs. K.-K.; she does not often come this way. Her country ends at the big woods near Linkwood Common; it is wild and open on the other side, you know, with abominable hills—just what you like. They gallop all day, and are half the night getting home; that is my experience of stag-hunting.

PLEASURES OF A MASTER OF HOUNDS.

Mr. Crop, finding he can do with another horse, buys a five-year-old of a farmer, thinking he will "grow" into money. He takes him out for the first time with the Fallowfield Foxhounds, who meet handy. After a long dragging day, with no particular sport, and being knocked over by young Hurryup, our master turns homeward at dusk, having made up his mind the young horse has a one-sided mouth, will take a month to get into condition, and has neither pace nor manners. Arrived at the kennels, behold Bolter, hatless, on the green with the hounds, helplessly contemplating Candid and Dauntless worrying his cap, the others roaming about in all directions. "Drunk again!" says Crop, and swears he will get rid of Bolter.

FURTHER PLEASURES OF KEEPING HOUNDS.

Letters begin to arrive, complaining of damage to fences, crops, etc. Browser reads:—"Laburnam Cottages. Sir,—Your dogs ran through my garden last week, and got into my



back kitchen; they upset a pail of pigs' food, and very much frightened my cat, which, about having kittens, I expect you, gentlemen, will pay me damages, etc., etc. Yours respectfully (all spelt wrong), Margaret Moulder, Widow." "Here's another," says Browser:—"Mr. Crop. Sir,—This is to give you notice to keep off my farm, with your hare dogs, as I won't have none of you gents gallopin' over my land, and not asking no leave. James Sharpset."

"Shall we give Margaret Moulder a sovereign, and shut her up?" says Crop.

"Certainly not," says Browser; "we should have twenty more widows after us directly. I shall send her one of the stable cats, with your compliments. She is only 'trying it on,' as Bolter would say. As to James Sharpset, he is an awkward old fellow; but if you give him a gallon of whiskey and a hare, next time you kill one handy, that will square *him* for ever so long."



A DAY WITH THE FALLOWFIELD FOXHOUNDS.

Mr. Crop gets unexpectedly introduced to the mistress of the Hurricane Staghounds, Mrs. Korpe-Korpe (from behind a bush) having parted company, at a wire fence, with her horse, which Crop has stopped. "No, not a bit hurt, thanks; but will you kindly give me my skirt? It is left on my saddle!"

With an afternoon fox they get better acquainted; and on Browser joining them, both are invited to drive over, lunch, and see the kennels and hounds at

HURRICANE LODGE.

A comfortable old-fashioned house, gracious hostess, pleasant people to meet them. Capital luncheon. Perfectly arranged kennels. Stables full of useful "wear and tear" sort of horses. Five-and-twenty couple of well-bred hounds. Reuben, the huntsman, has known Mrs. Korpe-Korpe



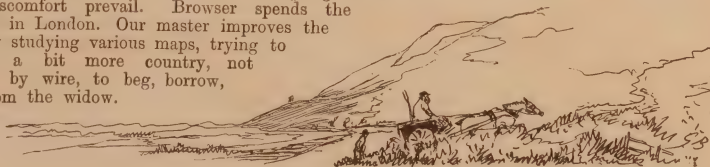
Give me my skin

half her life, and if she ever gave him a chance, by being absent from a meet, would be master as well as huntsman. The widow also holds her own with Mr. Beans, the stud groom; a difficult matter, but quiet women generally get their own way, and Beans knows his mistress *will* have hers.

Among the widow's visitors is Mr. Hoick; her hard-riding brother, who often stays with her; Lord Sobersides, a middle-aged bachelor of a serious turn; his sister, the Hon. Miss Mayfield, a great friend of Mrs. K-K's; and Mr. Hardup, an old acquaintance of Browser's, who has a wife and six children, and yet manages to keep horses at Blushington, whence he hunts in all directions four or five days a week. After a pleasant visit, our friends drive home, fourteen miles over a lovely hilly country, wild and open, without sign of wire or railway. It is fully appreciated by Crop, who admires the widow, her hounds and horses, and now covets her country. "Sort of woman who looks best in a habit," says Browser; "hasn't much to say for herself, either." Crop thinks her very sensible, and reminds Browser, that as they are driving the grey, and Bolter is to hunt him on Saturday, it would be as well to walk up the steepest hill. Browser declines, and smokes his pipe in silence. The rest of the journey is bitterly cold, and ends in a snowstorm.

MR. CROP AT EARTH.

Ice and snow for ten days. Horses can't get out, and become "mad fresh." Legs are filled, pumps are frozen, clipping and singeing and general discomfort prevail. Browser spends the frosty days in London. Our master improves the occasion by studying various maps, trying to make out a bit more country, not surrounded by wire, to beg, borrow, or steal from the widow.



A bit of Mr Crop's Country





ATHAW AND A MEET AT MUGGER HILL.

Close to Cuckoo Farm, Shooter's place. He is a generous host, and, to Crop's disgust, gives a breakfast, while hounds and hoxes are waiting about in a drizzling rain. Champagne, *foie-gras* pies, and luxuries unheard of in old times at a farm-house, are partaken of by the field. "Spoiling sport and wasting time," says the master. Everybody is there—for the foxhounds are not advertised, and ice on the ponds makes stag-hunting uncertain. Mrs. Hawthorn and her sister come in a smart pony cart; Toddleton on his great flat-footed cob; the Rev. Chuff on his mare, looking fat after the frost; Fred Hawthorn on an underbred mealy chesnut, not at all his sort; and the great sporting "historian," Dragon. He always patronises Shooter's meet, "dining and sleeping" the night before at Cuckoo Farm. His host, perhaps, agrees with Mr. Jorrock, that "the finest receipt for making men ride is shaking a sportin' hauthor afore them at startin'!"

The field certainly ride very boldly at first. Gossamer and Lavender are kicked, hares are headed, and Browser's halloos unheeded. At last Crop gets away at the back of the farm, with Dragon, Fred Hawthorn, Hammerton, the land-agent, who can't hold his big chesnut, and therefore *must* go, and a few more. "We're on a fox, I believe," says Dragon, bustling along on one of his famous New Forest ponies. Crop thinks so too, and sends the bay horse at Shooter's neat little fence, separating his "grounds" from a large turnip field. Five-and-twenty minutes nearly straight is the result, and to earth in a bank at the side of Cracker's Wood, to Bolter's amazement, who has also been "treated," and rides furiously. "About cooked," says he, leaving the young bay horse, with heaving flanks and shaking tail, and running to the bank, where Marplot, Restless, and Mermaid are investigating matters with the master. "Worth all the hare hunting," says Hawthorn, "but what will the foxhound people say?"

A BYE DAY WITH THE HURRICANE.

Mrs. Korpe-Korpe sends Browser a telegram to say her hounds will be at Linkwood Common on Friday. Will he come with his friend? "Of course he will," says Crop, and insists that Bolter be sent on with the horses.



The Hurricane Bye Day — Lost, half way

A clinking run. An hour and a-half. Only one check, when hounds ran up to the stag in a mill-pond. Crop's brown horse has left off pulling long before this, and at Larkington Downs half the field are far behind, and Browser is not to be seen; Mrs. Korpe-Korpe and Mrs. Galloper the only ladies at this point. Nobody asked for a second deer. Not even Sir Horsman Dogger, the eminent surgeon, who is devoted to stag-hunting. "Why," says he, "if the foxhounds had such a run, they would talk about it for a month!" Of a large field, all are missing but about ten or twelve. Four of the Spreadabout ladies were lost half-way, but nicked in afterwards with the artfulness of the sex. Mrs. Cutemdown appears with her velvet cap on one side, and a dab of mud on her cheek. Miss Matchem says she was misled by Miss Cahiree at the Downs, and poor Mrs. Hasbeen's hat came off, and she had to carry it in her lap for miles.

Crop is delighted with the run, the hounds, and the widow. What becomes of Browser? He is found, on the way home, fast asleep at a well-known hostelry, where they make excellent beef puddings on hunting days. Says he'll never ride the roan cob again, she has tired him so, and pulled his arms off. The roan cob the next day is equally exhausted, and more reduced.

A SHOW MEET

(In honour of Mrs. Korpe-Korpe). The widow and her brother are staying at Sir Timothy de Boots' for festivities on the "coming out" of his daughter. Crop is very fussy over the hounds he intends hunting that day, and makes Bolter put an extra polish on everything. He also gets himself up with more than usual care. He hates his "harrier uniform," as he calls it, but Browser notices a new green coat comes out, and a velvet cap, which hurts his head, and was supposed to be drafted. A lovely misty





morning for the meet at Beech Lawn. Bolter is mounted on the five-year-old, Browser on his bay cob, whose manners are perfect, "the boy" is promoted for the occasion as "second whip," and fancies himself not a little on the grey.

Mrs. Korpe-Korpe duly appears, and admires the pack; and the party in the house all turn out on horseback, on wheels, or on foot.—A more wretched day could hardly be imagined.

After Gaylass and Playful have been whipped off pursuit of Lady de Boots' favourite cat, they proceed to draw the fallows outside the park, without result for an hour. Crop and Chuff and young Hawthorn spread out on a rough bit of plough, and work right across it. A hare springs up from under Browser's horse's feet, and everybody halloos and gallops. Lucifer, Dainty, and Mermaid poke about and work back in a methodical and exasperating way. They run for a few yards, and then begin to investigate again. Up jumps another hare, and everybody again halloos. Dainty and Co. take no notice. "Let 'em alone," says Dick Barle, "let 'em stick to their first love—it's always the best!" This provokes merriment. Then the sun retires behind mist, and a drizzling rain begins. They get a short gallop at last, and Mrs. K.-K. delights Crop by whipping to him skilfully, *vice* Bolter, who is much occupied "jagging" the young horse's mouth, and jacketing the boy.

"She's the best whip in England," says Crop, as they ride home after the worst day on record, "and has promised to lend us a stag for our last day."

MR. HARDUP'S LITTLE DINNER

to some of the members of the hunt. After which they discuss prospects for next season, and the master suggests trying for extension of country on the Blushington and Linkwood side. Browser is dead against it. Fred Hawthorn suggests asking Mrs. Korpe-Korpe boldly to give them up a few acres. Toddleton thinks it not worth bothering about. Old Gobbler declares there is only one way of getting it, *viz.*, by marrying the widow! Roars of laughter, and the discussion ends in smoke and grog.





is supposed to be gone with the Queen's. In fact, he has another last day with the Hurricane, at Crashington Heath.

KORPE-KORPE lends a stag for the last day. Turning him out—one thing; taking him—quite another.

Bolter gets rolled over at once; Plod tries to help; Clod retires behind a tree; Hawthorn gets a black-eye; Mrs. Cutemdown nearly kills herself with laughing, and makes a capital story of it to the Spreadabout people.

Last days with the Fallowfield are not so amusing; no one expects much sport with hot sun and dusty fallows. Whole days are passed, running first one fox, then another. Gossip is mostly about the coming Steeplechases of the hunt.

Browner declares it is time to give up. His horses are done—the grey wants blistering; and Bolter has nearly spoilt the young horse, with the stag. Crop says he will have one more day, and

THE FALLOWFIELD HUNT STEEPLECHASES.

Over a pretty bit of country, close to Cramphurst, and handy for all to reach. The usual entries for heavy and light weight subscribers, a farmer's race, and a new feature in the programme is a suggestion for a ladies' race. This entails a special meeting; and Mrs. Korpe-Korpe presides. Mrs. Galloper proposes riding in breeches and top-boots, on a man's saddle, with a scarlet tunic or jacket. Mrs. Cutemdown seconds the proposal. Mrs. Hawthorn says if that is arranged, she cannot ride in the race, as her husband would not allow it. Miss Evergreen suggests safety skirts which *give way*, or come off, in case of falling. Then some one begins to argue about stirrup-irons. Mrs. Cutemdown contradicts everything that is said; but as she rides without any, her opinion is not considered of much value. Eventually,



Turning out, one thing Taking him quite and

after a proposal from Miss Matchem, that every lady should appear in a new scarlet habit, which is received with mingled satisfaction and derisive laughter, nothing definite is settled. Mrs. Korpe-Korpe cannot obtain a hearing, and the meeting breaks up in confusion.

The race day comes. It has rained all night, so the course is in capital order; but the wind is cold, as in winter. Browser is asked to be starter for the heavy-weights. Crop and young Hawthorn ride in the light-weight class, and our master thinks he is sure to win, if the bay will try. Hawthorn gets what he afterwards describes as "wedged in," at the start, and has not a chance. The second time round, after clearing the water the first time, Crop goes in head first, the bay jumping short. The brook being a natural one, with rotten banks, he is covered with black mud, and by the time he has remounted, the others are far ahead, and the race won by Lord Shamrock; our master coming in last, amid roars of laughter at his appearance.

In the HEAVY-WEIGHT race there is great fun; some of them do not go half round the first time, and one gets spread out on top of a thick, quick hedge, where he remains till somebody lifts him off.

In the FARMERS' RACE, Plod goes part of the course without his hat, and the rest of it after his horse. Clod and Shooter, who hate each other, ride jealously; Bumper runs out of the course; Scrambler's mare is too fat, and, with four others, is beaten the first time round. Clod and Shooter look like making a good race, when young Hawke, who has been down, and got his back plastered with mud, rushes up and wins by a short head.

The LADIES' RACE is the event of the day. First of all, nobody will undertake to be starter. Browser declines at once. Mr. Juniper says *he* won't do it. Toddleton and Hustler Tuck are lurching on Sir Timothy de Boots' brake, and won't move. The M.F.H. at last asks Mr. Hardup, who does not care what anyone says of him, and he consents to act. After several attempts and failures, consequent upon incessant chattering, the master is appealed to, and says he must stop the race, unless the ladies are silent at the start. At last they get off. Mrs. Galloper makes the running, followed by Mrs. Hawthorn to the first fence, where her cob refuses. With some trouble she gets over after her sister and two others. A lady on a roaring grey comes next, and Mrs. Cutemdown last. Mrs. Galloper still leading, goes as hard



Over Mr. Crook!

as she can at the brook the first time round, and gets well over; Miss Matchem and Miss Cahiree come next; Miss Evergreen's horse blunders at the fence out of the stubble field, but scrambles up, and is joined by Mrs. Cutemdown, whose horse is fittest of the lot. Mrs. Hawthorn is now dreadfully out of breath, and last. The second time round, Mrs. Galloper is caught by Mrs. Cutemdown at the posts and rails; Mrs. G.'s horse swerves, and she is deposited on the bank, in her boots and breeches, the horse going on alone with the safety skirt. Mrs. Cutemdown is now leading, and all disappear on the top of the hill. She is next seen on her feet, struggling to remount her nag on the plough descending to the last fence. A desperate race now ensues between Miss Cahiree and Miss Matchem; the lady on the grey next, a long way behind. A dead heat is declared. None of the others turn up, having left the course at different points, and were

afterwards found refreshing at Sir Timothy's break. The widow scratched her mare at the last moment, and takes no part in the race; she is wrapped in furs, and looks rather bored in Lady de Boots' carriage, with Miss Mayfield, Mr. Hoick, and Lord S. in attendance.

Mr. Crop's ardour in the day's proceedings is rather damped by his ducking. His coat is covered with black mud, his boots are still full of water, and he shivers in the cold wind. He has no dry clothes handy. Impossible to appear near the de Boots' carriage again! Bolter has taken the bay home; and he can't find the dog-cart, where he has left a covert coat. To complete his annoyance, he sees Browser talking to Mrs. K.-K., and believes they are both laughing at him, as he splashes through the mud, and retreats from the scene. He is cross with everybody, and



For a Silver



[39]

The Ladies Race
Miss Matchem appears in her a breeches
on a man's saddle!!
- P3

with the widow in particular, for not informing him that she had scratched her mare for the race.

A DINNER AT BEECH LAWN THE EVENING OF THE STEEPLECHASES.

Some cheery, as well as dreary, county people, including Mrs. Korpe-Korpe, Miss Mayfield and her brother, who have stayed with the de Boots, for the races; young Lord Shanrock, in high spirits at his morning's win; the Hawthorns, Mr. and Mrs. Hardup, Crop, Chuff, and Browser. The latter monopolises the widow at dinner; Lord Sobersides, who is rather deaf, on her other side. "Awful flirt!" says the



Browser before he proposes—and after.



vicar to Crop, who stops for a pipe with him, after walking home early together. He would never leave off laughing, did he know that Browser has, after dining well, proposed to Mrs. K.-K., in the conservatory, during Miss de Boots' duet on the piano with Miss Mayfield. When he gets back to the cottage, Crop finds Browser has gone to bed; and, in a desperate state of mind, sits down to write, determined to propose to the widow, and what he calls "settle it," one way or the other. After many "rough copies," and failing to express his feelings—"Must ask Chuff," says he, and gives it up in despair.

Next day, talks it over with the vicar, who scribbles out what *he* should say. Crop disapproves, but can't do any better.



A match on the flat — owners up

[41]

Not on the case
S.B.



NATOMY OF A LOVE LETTER.

"You should divide it into heads," says the Vicar, "like I do my sermons. Begin with your feelings—no pleasure hunting without her—hate the sight of the harriers." "So I do," says Crop; "keep pottering about the same place for half an hour at a time."—"No, no!" interrupts Chuff, "stick to your text, begin with *your* feelings—go on about *hers*. Can she make up her mind to take you?" "With all faults," cuts in Crop. Browser, appearing at the door, thinks they are writing about horses, adds: "Can be returned if not answering the description."

(Browser has said nothing of his own failure, which he does not appear to have taken to heart.)

SUNDAY MORNING NEWS.

"Have you seen the paper?" says Fred Hawthorn, bursting in while our friends breakfast, and snatching "Horse and Hound" from Browser, who is studying Tattersall's catalogue, reads: "It is rumoured that a marriage is arranged between Lord Sobersides and Mrs. Korpe-Korpe, of Hurricane Lodge. Should this be true, probably the lady's well-known staghounds will be sold, and the country given up." Sensation! Silence for a moment. Crop becomes very red in the face. Browser bursts out laughing, and spills his coffee over a spring-like white waistcoat. "What do you think of that?" says Hawthorn. "You'll get that bit of country for nothing, after all! The old chap would not let her ride at the steeplechases; that's why the mare was scratched. *He'll* stop her galloping, etc." "I don't believe it," says Crop, and goes down to the vicarage after church, reflecting on the artfulness of women, and vowing to have no more to do with them. "What did I tell you?" says Chuff. "She ought to go about marked 'dangerous,' like a fellow riding a kicker." The vicar is a loyal friend, and never tells of the love-letter, now consigned to the flames.

Browser seems bent on business, and wants to know if Crop means to try for increased subscriptions, and the coveted corner of country; because, if so, he must send out a circular to the hunt, etc. . . . Crop is cross, and for the present indifferent.



Sunday morning News



THE BEGINNING OF JUNE.

At the Hurricane kennels. Crop has come over to look at three couple of hounds he wants to buy for a friend in Ireland. Reuben receives him, and says Gambler and Gaylad, Chancellor, Ravager, Pilot, and Rattler are the ones the Missis picked out for him; but "Here *is* the Missis"; and Reuben retires. Mrs. K-K says she has changed her mind, and don't want to sell any. "I can't part with my hounds to please Lord Sobersides! Oh, Mr. Crop!" and Mrs. Korpe-Korpe, standing in the middle of the grass paddock, begins to cry! "Then *don't* part with them," says Crop, and feels inclined to cry too.

A scene! Astonishment of the hounds, also of Mr. Hoick and Lord Sobersides, who appear at the door.

THE END OF OCTOBER.

Another paragraph in "Horse and Hound":—"The Hurricane Staghounds will meet on Thursday, October 30th, at Linkwood

Hurricane Lodge, at 11 a.m. Al-horror by the new master and popular be otherwise than delighted to receive service of silver plate from the a cup from supporters of the and Mrs. Crop 'on their marriage.'" considers hideous, and believes tion on it is:—"Presented to their Dogs."

Common, 12 o'clock. Breakfast at though hunt breakfasts are held in mistress of these hounds, they cannot their friends on this occasion. A members of the Hurricane Hunt, and Harriers, are to be presented to Mr.

N.B.—Crop's cup he privately Browser designed it. The inscription Master by the Currant Jelly







